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# **Model Policies for Creating a Healthy Nutrition and Physical Activity Environment in Child Care Settings**



**Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services  
Bureau of Community Food and Nutrition Assistance**

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## INTRODUCTION

The first few years of a child's life are critical years for growth and brain development. It is also a time when children begin forming eating and exercise habits that last a lifetime. Nationwide, nearly 74 percent of children from 3 to 6 years of age are in some type of child care, including 56 percent in center-based care.

Child care centers and family child care homes serve an important role in helping young children develop good eating and physical activity habits. Children in care settings may receive half or more of their daily nutritional needs while in care. Since these meals and snacks supply such a major portion of a child's total intake, the food and the environment in which the foods are offered impact children's health, not only today, but in the future as well. Child care providers have a major responsibility to provide healthy foods in a supportive environment. Mealtimes can be a time for learning about nutrition, hand washing, table manners, conversations and motor skills, as well as an opportunity to try new foods.

The amount and type of exercise, or physical activity, that children receive in child care also has a long-lasting impact on future activity habits. Physical activity helps children develop and improve motor skills, such as running, jumping and catching. If children do not have opportunities to learn and develop these skills, they may be more likely to be inactive as adults.

Adults who work with young children can create environments to help children develop healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. This manual is designed to be a resource to centers and family child care homes as they work to improve their nutrition and physical activity environment. This information can be used by all types of child care facilities, large or small, urban or rural, home-based or center-based. All children deserve to be cared for in a facility that promotes good nutrition and physical activity.

### What Is a Policy?

A policy is a written course of action that is enforced. Policies are established to guide and determine present and future decisions.

Since child care meals and snacks supply such a major portion of a child's total intake, the food and environment in which the foods are offered impact children's health, not only today, but in the future as well.



## **Why Do You Need a Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy?**

Policies relating to nutrition and physical activity assure that the children in your care receive the best possible care. This set of policies will guide your facility and staff in making decisions and choices every day. Day in and day out practices of centers and homes can either support or discourage healthy behaviors. Often we do not think about these practices and their impact, but if managed well, day-to-day practices can result in a healthier environment for children in care.

With the rapidly rising rates of obesity in the United States and Missouri, more and more parents have an interest in their child's nutrition and activity levels. Parents deciding on where to place their children in care may be very interested to learn that your facility has specific policies on nutrition and physical activity. Sharing these policies with parents makes it easier for parents to reach important decisions regarding their child's care.

There are many benefits to having nutrition and physical activity policies. Policies can help you to:

- Outline a plan for center staff, parents, licensing officials and others, for quality nutrition care;
- Provide clear guidelines for staff;
- Provide a basis for evaluation of your facility and staff and identify areas which may need improvement;
- Educate new staff and parents on current nutrition and physical activity practices;
- Guide decisions and choices your facility makes every day;
- Assure children get the same care in each classroom and the same care from day to day, week to week;
- Demonstrate a caring attitude about the health of the children in the facility; and
- Use ideal practices to support nutrition and physical activity.

## **Developing Your Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy**

Now that you understand the importance of having nutrition and physical activity policies, you are ready to develop your own set of policies to support a healthy environment. Sample policy statements that reflect the best practices for child care are listed in the next section of this guide. However, these policies are provided as a guide only. Every child care facility/home should prepare its own, individualized set of policies with input from parents, staff and perhaps the advice of a nutrition expert (registered dietitian) if necessary.

Consider the following areas when developing policies that will impact your facility's nutrition environment:

- Healthy foods and drinks
  - What should be offered?

- When should it be offered?
- How much should be offered?
- Mealtime environment
  - How does staff interact with children during meals?
  - Do menus reflect the social, cultural and family values of the children?
- Learning about food
  - How are children involved in food preparation and awareness activities?
  - What education do you provide for children, parents and staff?



Consider the following areas when developing policies that will impact your facility's physical activity environment:

- Playtime
  - How much time should be allowed for active play?
  - How long should children be inactive at one time?
- Play environment
  - What types of equipment, both permanent and movable, are needed or offered?
  - How much TV time should children be allowed each day?
- Learning about physical activity
  - What education do you provide for children, parents and staff?

### **Hints for Developing a Policy and Making It Work**

- Use policies that make sense for your facility. Different facilities need different types of policies. Factors that shape policies include where and how food is purchased, what types of foods are purchased, the type of meal service, the equipment available and the facility layout or design.
- Talk with staff and parents when developing policies. This important step assures that those involved understand their role and are prepared to put the policies into action.
- Make sure parents are aware of your nutrition and physical activity policies when enrolling their children in your facility.
- Assign specific staff members to put policies into action.
- Continually review your policies to provide ongoing quality nutrition care and physical activity.

## Making Your Policies Work

Complete this chart as you develop your policy strategies. Following these steps will help make your facility's policies a daily practice.

Step	Action	Person Responsible	Completion Date
<b>Step 1</b>	Distribute a copy of the policy to all staff and parents.		
<b>Step 2</b>	Discuss and monitor current nutrition and activity practices with staff and parents. Identify practices not consistent with your policy.		
<b>Step 3</b>	Identify and address barriers to change. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Brainstorm barriers and ideas in a group meeting.</li><li>○ Decide on effective ways to change current behavior.</li></ul>		
<b>Step 4</b>	Develop an action plan for the changes needed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Identify who will be responsible for making these changes and by what date.</li><li>○ Review your action plan regularly to ensure plans are carried out.</li></ul>		
<b>Step 5</b>	Review all current food and nutrition and physical activity practices every six months to ensure they are consistent with your policy.		

# MODEL POLICIES FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION



## Model Policies for a Healthy Nutrition Environment

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## Policy Area: Beverages

### Overview:

Beverages are the liquids we drink. Today, there is a wide variety of fluid choices. If not selected carefully, beverages can add significant calories to children's diets without adding nutrients. Water is the best beverage choice for children between meals, including at snack time. Water satisfies thirst without adding calories that could lead to weight gain. It also helps prevent dental caries by decreasing the amount of acid in the mouth.

Studies show that children who drink soft drinks are more likely to be overweight.

Meals should include 1% or skim milk for children over age 2, with water or 100% juice served at snacks.



**Model Policy 1: Drinking water is available at all times for self-serve, both indoors and outdoors.**

**Rationale**

Children play hard and need enough fluid to stay well hydrated. When water is available within easy reach, it will be looked to first to satisfy thirst. Children often do not know when they are thirsty and should be encouraged to drink throughout the day. Encouraging sips of water between meals helps to reduce thirst. Children are then able to focus on foods at mealtimes, rather than filling up on milk before eating their meal.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Find creative ways to have water within reach to children. Try child-size water coolers or keep pitchers of ice water and small paper cups in classrooms.
- Encourage children to drink water when coming inside from the playground.
- Encourage children to drink water before or after activities or using the bathroom.
- Avoid spills by filling water pitchers only part way, by using pitchers with lids, and by helping younger children to pour water.
- Routinely offer water between meals or when a child is still thirsty.
- Remind staff to drink water between meals. They are role models for the children.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Serve water and 100% juice in place of sweetened beverages at parent meetings.
- Let parents know that your facility uses water as the first choice for thirst.
- Encourage parents to offer water at home.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Encourage all children over one year of age to drink at least one cup of water each day.
- Show children that adults in the facility like to drink water too.
- Make it more fun. Give children fun straws to drink water.
- Add lemon, lime or orange slices to water to make it tastier for children.

**Model Policy 2: 100% juice is offered no more than three times a week.**

**Rationale**

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that preschool age children drink no more than 4 to 6 ounces of 100% fruit juice each day. In small amounts, juice is a healthy choice for children, but they tend to drink it in place of water. If consumed in excess, children tend to fill up on juice and may eat less of more nutritious foods during meals and snacks. Too much juice may also provide more calories than needed and expose children’s teeth to a lot of sugar. Fruits and vegetables provide more fiber and less sugar than 100% fruit juice.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Review menus and meal times to see how much juice is served. Juice does not need to be removed completely from menus, just limited.
- Identify easy-to-eat alternatives to juice like orange sections, fruit salad or banana halves.
- Offer water between meals and at snacks.
- Educate staff about the potential harm of too much juice in a child’s diet.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Educate parents about potential harm of too much juice in a child’s diet.
- Let parents know that your facility uses water as the first choice for thirst and encourage them to do the same at home.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Encourage all children over one year of age to drink at least one cup of water each day.
- Show children that adults in the facility like to drink water too.
- Make it more fun. Give children fun straws to drink water.
- Add lemon, lime or orange slices to water to make it more appetizing for children.

**Model Policy 3: Only skim or 1% milk is served to children age 2 and older.**

**Rationale**

Milk is an excellent source of calcium, protein and other nutrients, essential to the healthy growth and development of children. The American Academy of Pediatrics supports drinking of low-fat and skim milk by children ages 2 years and older. These milk choices have as much calcium and vitamin D as whole or 2% milk without the extra fat, cholesterol and calories.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Make the switch without much fuss. Milk taste tests done with children show that most cannot tell the difference. Most children will accept whatever type of milk is poured in their glass.
- Make the switch gradually by going from whole to 2% to 1% to skim over a few weeks.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Send information home to parents about the safety and benefits of serving lower fat milk to children over 2 years of age.
- Serve skim or low-fat milk at parent meetings.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Show the children that staff members like to drink skim or 1% milk too.

**Model Policy 4: Soda and other vending machines are not located on-site.**

**Rationale**

Vending machines provide opportunities for staff to buy soda, other sweetened beverages and foods often high in fat and sugar. Having them on-site increases the likelihood that staff will eat and drink these items in front of children in the facility. Vending machines on-site, especially if located in a public area, also send a message to families that these foods and beverages are “okay” for children to consume.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- If vending must be on-site:
  - Review any existing vending contracts. If the contract allows for a choice, choose the healthiest options available. Water and 100% juice should be offered as an alternative to soda.
  - Relocate the vending machine so that it is not visible or accessible to children and parents.
- Identify other potential revenue sources if your facility relies on vending for additional income.
- Sell healthy snacks to parents as they pick up children to help offset some of the losses.
- Keep a supply of water and healthy drinks available for staff to have or buy.
- Set up a water cooler for staff use.
- Educate staff on the importance of being a positive role model for children in their care. Encourage them to drink milk or water with children at meals to set a good example.
- Provide an in-service to staff on healthy choices and healthy eating habits.

## Policy Area: Menus and Variety

### Overview

A perfect food that has all the essential nutrients does not exist. A food may be a good source of some vitamins and minerals but still lack other important ones. Therefore, eating a variety of foods helps assure that children get all the nutrients essential for good health and development. By regularly serving a variety of foods, children learn healthy food habits and will not become bored with the foods offered. This practice also increases the likelihood that children will enjoy a variety of foods later in life.



**Model Policy 5:** A cycle menu of three weeks or longer that changes with the seasons is used. Entrees are repeated no more than two times throughout the cycle, and repetition of other food items is minimal.

**Rationale**

Use of a cycle menu that is at least three weeks provides balanced and varied menus. It also helps with planning purchase orders and work schedules. Taking advantage of seasonal items may help to reduce food costs and can be used to link the menu to classroom nutrition education activities.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Send food service staff to menu planning training.
- Obtain meal planning and recipe resources from USDA’s Team Nutrition program.
- Lower food costs by buying frozen meats and vegetables that can be bought in bulk and used as needed.
- Reduce costs by using seasonal items, such as apples in the fall and fresh fruits and vegetables in the summer.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Talk to parents about healthy foods their children eat at home that might not be served at your facility.
- Ask parents to suggest foods that your facility could introduce.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Encourage staff to talk to children about what they are eating and how they enjoy healthier foods.
- Children eat with their eyes. Serve foods that have different colors and textures.
- Ask kids to share a favorite healthy food.
- Offer nutrition lessons about foods on the menu.

**Menu Planning Resources:**

- <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/library.html>
- <http://www.nfsmi.org/>

**Model Policy 6: Menus include foods from a variety of cultures.**

**Rationale**

Children should be offered foods from different cultures. Tasting and eating such foods will help children learn about different parts of the world, cultural diversity and different customs. Offering foods from different cultures also encourages children to try new flavors and increases variety in menus.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Sponsor an ethnic recipe contest among staff.
- Include common ethnic foods eaten by staff members on menus.
- Send food service staff to menu planning training.
- Use meal planning and recipe resources from USDA’s Team Nutrition program.
- Look for readily available canned or frozen cultural foods.
- Keep ethnic menus healthy by using low-fat cheeses and chicken or turkey instead of beef.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Ask parents to suggest foods that your facility could offer.
- Give parents a list of “new foods” that were offered to their child. Encourage them to try these foods at home.
- Sponsor an ethnic recipe contest among families.
- Provide parents with recipes for cultural dishes. Encourage them to prepare these foods at home.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Encourage staff to talk to children about what they are eating and how they enjoy different foods.
- Ask kids to share a favorite ethnic food.
- Make it fun. Choose a country or ethnicity and have a celebration including regional food, music and fun activities.
- Invite family members of different cultures to eat with children. They can talk about the foods offered from their culture.

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## Policy Area: Mealtime Environment

### Overview

A supportive mealtime environment is important for nurturing healthy eating habits in young children. Child care staff members serve as role models for children by trying new foods, eating healthy foods served, and by not bringing unhealthy foods into the classroom. Adults set the feeding environment for children. They help children stay in touch with their internal hunger and fullness cues to self-regulate their food intake. Young children's appetites often vary day to day and their tastes may change overnight. When feeding young children, the "division of responsibility"



should be followed. It is the caregiver's duty to buy, prepare and serve healthy meals and snacks. It is the child's duty to decide how much (if any) and what to eat. If this "division of responsibility" is respected, children will learn to try new foods, respect their fullness cues, and maintain lifelong healthy eating habits. It is important to remember that children will not starve; avoid turning mealtimes into power struggles.

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**Model Policy 7: Staff members allow children to decide how much to eat. Children are never forced to eat or to try new foods.**

**Rationale**

To assist in shaping healthy eating habits, staff can help children learn to listen to their bodies to decide whether they are hungry, full or eating out of habit. Children should not be forced to eat if they are full and should be given more food if they are still hungry. Children may learn to overeat if they are made to eat everything or clean their plates, which can lead to weight problems later in life. Interfering with their internal hunger and fullness cues could lead to unhealthy eating patterns.

<b>Tips for changing current practice:</b>	<b>Tips for getting support from parents:</b>	<b>Tips for getting support from kids:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Educate all new staff about children’s variable eating habits.</li> <li>○ Attend mealtimes to watch staff interaction with children.</li> <li>○ Remind staff that a child’s eating behavior may vary from day to day.</li> <li>○ Remind staff that it is normal for children not to eat everything on their plates.</li> <li>○ Remind staff of the division of responsibility when feeding children.</li> <li>○ Remind staff to ask about fullness before offering seconds.</li> <li>○ Avoid waste by serving appropriate portions.</li> <li>○ Offer meals family style. Let children decide how much of each meal component they will eat.</li> <li>○ Have extra food available and let children help themselves if they are still hungry.</li> <li>○ Limit offers of seconds (to all children) to foods of lower caloric value such as fruits and vegetables. Denying a child food may increase his/her desire to eat more food.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Encourage parents to visit during mealtime to observe the center’s approach to serving food.</li> <li>○ Give parents the center’s nutrition plan, which outlines policies for mealtime and serving food (see Appendix A, p. 49).</li> <li>○ Show parents that their child has learned to listen to his or her body to decide if he or she is hungry or full. Encourage parents to do the same at home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Teach children in a fun way what it means to listen to their body. For example, talk about how their stomach might feel if they eat too much or what happens when they get hungry.</li> <li>○ Serve meals family style. Have extra food available so that children can serve themselves if they are still hungry.</li> </ul>

**Model Policy 8: Staff members encourage children to try a new or less favorite food but never force a child to try or to eat something they do not like.**

**Rationale**

Good eating habits do not just happen—they must be learned. Child care providers can support positive eating habits by successfully introducing new foods and encouraging good attitudes toward food. Often, children are more willing to try new foods when away from home, especially when they see other children eating those foods.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Be a positive role model. Have staff try new foods and express how much they enjoyed trying them.
- Introduce new foods one at a time.
- Offer a very small amount of a new food. Children will learn new flavors and textures without being overwhelmed.
- Serve new foods first, when children are most hungry and more likely to try something new.
- Enlist the help of an eager child who is usually open to trying new foods. Children will be more excited to try a new food if another child has already tried and liked it.
- Encourage but do not force a child to try a new food. Children may be more willing to try a new food when there is no pressure and they are in control.
- Offer new foods over and over again to help children become familiar with them.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Give parents a list of “new foods” that were offered to their child. Encourage them to try these new foods at home.
- Talk to parents about healthy foods their children eat at home that might not be served at the facility.
- Send home recipes using new foods tried during meals.
- Ask parents to vote on new items before adding them to the menu.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Talk about new foods being offered. Talk about how foods grow, their color, shape, texture, etc. This will help to increase familiarity with the new food.
- Make it fun. Have a tasting party.
- Ask children about which food group the new food comes from or ask them to describe why the new food tastes good and to describe the new food—is it smooth, crunchy, sweet, juicy or colorful?
- Have children help prepare a snack that includes the new food.
- Encourage children to “play” with their food. Kids are more likely to try new foods if they have the opportunity to touch and smell them first.
- Ask children to try a new food at home and report back to the class.
- Read a story about new foods being offered.
- Ask children to vote on new items before adding them to the menu.

**Model Policy 9: Staff members never use food to reward good behavior.**

**Rationale**

Offering food to encourage or reward behavior places unnecessary importance on food and may have negative effects. This action teaches children to eat when they are not hungry and can alter their internal hunger and fullness cues. Foods commonly used to encourage positive behavior, such as candy or cookies, are often high in fat or sugars with little nutrients. These foods offer little to support proper growth and development. As children become older, rewarding them with food may lead to emotional overeating and excessive weight gain.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Reward children with nonfood options. Reward with:
  - Praise,
  - Special privileges such as line leader, teacher’s assistant or choosing the next activity,
  - Trips to the “treasure chest” that has nonfood items, such as stickers, bookmarks, bubbles, etc.,
  - More outdoor playtime,
  - Favorite book at story time,
  - Points—use a point system where children earn points that add up toward a bigger prize.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Tell parents about your rewards policy and encourage them to use the same approach at home.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Social rewards, which involve attention, praise, or thanks, are often more highly valued by children than a toy or food.

**Model Policy 10: Staff members join children at the table for meals and snacks.**

**Rationale**

An important way for staff to serve as good role models for children in their care is to sit with them and eat the same foods and drinks served. This time together provides many openings for teachers or staff to:

- Teach children about healthy foods,
- Talk about the foods served and where they came from,
- Encourage proper table manners,
- Engage children in a pleasant discussion to build communication skills,
- Teach children about the tastes, smells, textures and different colors and shapes of foods.

These opportunities may not happen unless staff and children are sitting down for meals together. Children also tend to eat better when a meal is shared with an adult.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Make schedules that allow staff to have their break during naptime, not mealtime.
- Serve family style meals so that staff can sit and enjoy the meal with the children instead of serving the meal.
- Ask management team members to eat with the children.
- Tell new staff that they are expected to be good role models.
- Have staff taste test new menu items to get their support before serving them to children.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Invite parents to eat with their child at mealtimes.

**Model Policy 11: Staff members consume the same food and drinks as children. Staff members do not consume other foods or beverages in front of the children.**

**Rationale**

Children are always watching their teachers, especially during mealtime. Teachers should be willing to try new foods and adopt the same behaviors that they are trying to teach children. When a new food is served, teachers can significantly influence the children's acceptance through their own enthusiasm for trying new things. On the other hand, if staff eat or drink less healthy foods in front of children, they are actually sending negative messages to children.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Ask staff to try a small amount of everything served to children. Staff should avoid making any negative comments in front of the children.
- Give staff short breaks outside the classroom.
- Ask staff to drink only water or beverages served to the children at snack and mealtimes.
- Make mealtime expectations clear to staff during the hiring process.
- Share policy changes at staff meetings and ask for everyone's cooperation.
- Remove soda machines from the facility. If this is not an option, relocate them to an area only accessible/visible by staff.
- Teach staff the importance of role modeling healthy eating.
- Remind staff to think about strategies they used with their own children to encourage healthier eating habits.

**Model Policy 12: Meals are served family style.**

**Rationale**

Family style meals create an opportunity for children to practice their independence; pouring, spooning, and passing skills; and table manners. Modeling and enforcing such behavior at child care facilities can foster habits that carry into other environments, including the home. Also, allowing children to choose their own portion sizes may help prevent children from overeating or feeling pressured to eat food they do not want.

**Definition:** *Family style is a type of meal service that allows children to serve themselves (when developmentally ready) at the table from common platters of food with assistance from supervising adults who set the example.*

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Give children jobs at mealtimes, such as setting the table and clearing and cleaning the table.
- Start with one or two easily served items. Not all foods have to be served family style.
- Use child-sized serving bowls, utensils and pitchers to lessen spills.
- Keep table size to no more than eight children.
- Let children decide how much of each food item to take.
- Have children help clean up after a spill, taking care to help them feel good about helping instead of feeling bad about the spill.
- Provide each menu item in several small bowls so that if a child touches the food, it can be thrown away with limited waste.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Invite parents to join their children at mealtime so they can observe the positive atmosphere and the skills their child has learned. Encourage parents to have their child take part in mealtime tasks at home.
- Encourage parents to be a good role model for their children when it comes to healthy eating.
- Suggest parents sit as a family for meals as frequently as possible.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Ask children to talk about their favorite foods.
- Encourage children to practice fine motor skills during play to increase their confidence with mealtime tasks, such as pouring milk.
- Practice passing, serving and pouring before starting family style meal service. Have children pass bowls of dried beans or rice and small pitchers of water.

**Model Policy 13: The center displays pictures or posters that support healthy eating.**

**Rationale**

Environmental factors can influence healthy eating behaviors; therefore it is important to design children's environments to include objects that help support good nutrition. Simple acts of displaying posters with pictures of healthy foods, discussing and asking questions, showing enthusiasm about food, and being happy during mealtimes will show children that this part of their day is valuable to them and others.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Order free posters online.
- Have children create their own pictures of their favorite fruits and vegetables or of them eating meals with their families and friends to hang on the wall.
- Borrow books from the local library about different foods, healthy eating habits and gardening.

**Resources:**

<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/library.html>  
[www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)

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**Policy Area:****Foods from Outside the Facility****Overview**

A healthy nutrition environment is created by serving nutritious foods during regular meals and snacks as well as at special occasions. Typical celebrations usually include calorie dense foods of limited nutritional value, such as cookies, cake and candy. On occasion, this may not pose a problem, but it sends a message to children that eating such foods is the only way to celebrate.



**Model Policy 14: The center has guidelines for foods or nonfood items brought into the facility and served for holidays and celebrations (See Appendix B, p. 51).**

**Rationale:**

Child care facilities can let parents know gently but firmly that the facility supports a healthier approach to celebrations. This can easily be done by including the facility policy in the center handbook given to parents. Everyone benefits from healthy choices, and it sends a message to families that good nutrition is important to the facility.

**Tips for changing current practice/Tips for encouraging support from parents:**

- Provide a list of facility-provided choices for parents to order for their child’s special occasion.
- Give parents ideas for nonfood treats to bring in for birthdays and other celebrations (see parent handout). Suggest nonfood treats like bubbles and party hats (See Appendix C, p. 54 and Appendix D, p.55).
- Encourage parents to share with staff their child’s favorite nonfood items or activities that can be included in the celebration. For example, a song, book or game. Offer to include these special activities for a child’s birthday.
- Encourage parents to visit the center to help celebrate the child’s birthday.
- Create a special birthday activity as a way to celebrate instead of offering food.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Ask children to develop a list of healthy foods and activities they would enjoy at celebrations and parties.
- Let children dress up as their favorite character on their birthday.
- Let the birthday child wear a special hat or crown to show they are having a special day.

**Model Policy 15: Holidays are celebrated with mostly healthy foods and nonfood treats.**

**Rationale**

Child care facilities can be a role model for the families using their services. They can move families toward a healthier way of celebrating by reducing unhealthy foods and increasing fun activities that are a part of celebrations. Birthdays and celebrations can include many healthy treats and help kids appreciate and learn about other cultures.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Host a recipe contest for staff to create the healthiest and best-tasting dish for a celebration.
- Ask staff to develop a list of activities for celebrations.
- Fill a piñata with toothbrushes, raisins, stickers, jump ropes and other fun toys.
- Use holiday celebrations as an opportunity to explore other cultures and ethnic traditions.
- Serve nutritious foods in a special way, such as heart-shaped sandwiches for Valentine’s Day.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Ask parents who celebrate different cultural holidays, such as Kwanzaa and Chanukah, to help find healthier foods or non-food ways to celebrate the holiday.
- Tell parents during center enrollment of the policy to serve healthier foods for holidays and celebrations. It is easier to get support early on. Tell parents the facility is working hard to create the healthiest environment possible for their children.
- Share recipes for healthier party treats with parents.
- Encourage parents to celebrate their child’s birthday with a favorite food other than cupcakes or cake (See Appendix C, p. 54).

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Have children help plan activities for celebrations.
- Let children help make a healthy snack.
- Plan a special trip away from the facility for a celebration.

**Model Policy 16: Fundraising activities consist of selling nonfood items only.**

**Rationale**

Fundraising is a common practice for many child care facilities. Even if the money raised is used to support things the facility really needs, the message becomes unclear when sales of unhealthy food items are used to raise funds. Also remember that families and staff buy much of the food that is sold. Having extra candy and sweets around the house makes it that much harder to encourage healthier eating for children.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Take advantage of the holiday season. Sell items people need for the holidays like wrapping paper or holiday cards.
- Search the Internet for alternative fundraising ideas.
- See Appendix E, p. 56, for more ideas and resources on nonfood fundraisers.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

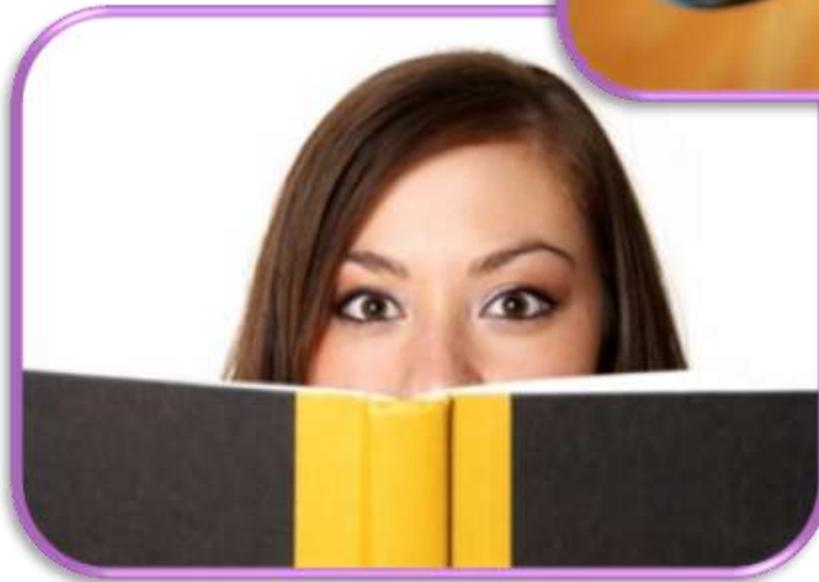
- Form a subcommittee of parents and staff who are interested in healthy fundraising alternatives.

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## Policy Area: Nutrition Education

### Overview

Nutrition is an important part of good health. Enjoying and learning about food in childhood leads to a lifetime of healthy behaviors. Child care facilities are ideal places to offer nutrition training for children, parents and staff. The more information they receive, the more likely they are to make healthy choices and support facility policies. Child care providers have a unique opportunity to teach children and their parents about nutrition through daily interactions.



**Model Policy 17: Staff members receive training on nutrition (other than food safety and food program guidelines) at least twice per year.**

**Rationale**

With education, staff will be better able to support policies and practices and provide better care to children. Staff involved in direct care should be knowledgeable about:

- Basic principles of child nutrition;
- Strategies for creating an environment that promotes the development of good eating habits; and
- The importance of their role as a model for children to follow in forming healthy habits.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Utilize services from community agencies, such as University of Missouri Extension or the Child Care Health Consultation Program to provide training on nutrition topics. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) also provides nutrition training for CACFP centers.
- Create individual learning plans for staff members that include nutrition.
- Schedule trainings on a variety of topics each year and consider combining nutrition information into trainings that address other issues (for example, behavior).
- Require an orientation lesson for all new staff that covers basic nutrition information and the facility policies.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Educate parents on the importance of nutrition education and healthy foods. Highlight the growing obesity epidemic and explain how nutrition within child care facilities can promote lifelong healthy eating habits.
- Explain to parents that nutrition education can be combined with regular classroom activities to reinforce concepts such as numbers, letters and colors.

**Model Policy 18: Nutrition education opportunities are offered to parents at least twice a year.**

**Rationale**

Parents are important role models to their children and play a big role in developing healthy nutrition behaviors. Healthy behaviors that are encouraged at school should be reinforced in the home by well-informed parents. Parents can model healthy behaviors when they:

- Talk to their children about healthy eating practices;
- Use good child-feeding practices; and
- Provide healthy food for meals and snacks.

Being more informed about nutrition will help parents support the facility policy.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Plan simple ways to include nutrition issues and messages into parent meetings and newsletters.
- Utilize community resources to provide nutrition education to parents, such as University of Missouri Extension, CACFP and dietitians from local health departments.
- Identify parents or volunteers that have training in nutrition or who work in settings with dietitians.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Send children home with nutrition education materials for parents.
- Include nutrition issues and topics in parent meetings and newsletters.
- Role model desired behaviors at parent meetings, such as offering physical activity and/or healthy snacks (if offered).
- Encourage parents to come to meals at the facility to better understand the meal process and reinforce a healthy nutrition environment.
- Keep parents informed about the fun nutrition and physical activity education activities that take place in the facility.
- Send home easy recipe ideas that parents and children can make together.
- Invite parents to take part in a nutrition activity, such as preparing a healthy snack.

# MODEL POLICIES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



## Model Policies for a Healthy Physical Activity Environment

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## Policy Area: Active Play and Inactive Time

### Overview

Children spend the same, if not more, time playing video games, watching television or using a computer than they do playing outside. Current recommendations suggest all children should be physically active every day. Children get many benefits from being physically active, including:

- reduced risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol,
- healthy bones and muscles,
- improved strength and endurance,
- good mental health and cognition,
- increased self-esteem.

Even though young children tend to be naturally active, it is important for adults to recognize that they do not develop advanced motor skills, like kicking and hopping, without encouragement and adult involvement. As children

develop more advanced motor coordination, they begin to increase their self-esteem and link physical activity with positive experiences. Both of these are important to lay the groundwork for being regularly active into adulthood.



**Model Policy 1: Children have at least 120 minutes of active playtime each day.**

**Rationale**

Children need at least 120 minutes of active play every day, including both structured (teacher-led) and unstructured (free play) playtime to maintain their fitness levels and to develop physically, mentally and emotionally. Physical activity periods should be long enough for children to also get health benefits. Active playtime means that children are allowed to move freely, enjoying active movements such as skipping, running and climbing.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Create a daily schedule that includes active play.
- Include two to three blocks of active playtime across the day. Include both inside and outside play.
- Use active learning in daily lesson plans, allowing for children to learn through movement.
- Use tested physical activity lessons that include a number of fun activities mixing learning and active playtime.
- Listen to music and get the classroom moving.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Give parents information about the importance of physical activity for children’s physical, mental and emotional health.
- Talk to parents about the activities children do during the day.
- Encourage parents to spend time enjoying active play with their kids at home.
- Send home ideas for family physical activities.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Play with children.
- Make physical activity fun through active play.
- Have reasonable expectations. Challenge children; don’t scare them.
- Encourage cooperation, not competition.

**Model Policy 2: Children participate in structured physical activities (teacher-led) two or more times each day.**

**Rationale**

Children who develop gross motor skills at a young age are more likely to be physically active throughout their lives. Children do not naturally develop basic movement skills. As a result, it is important that staff involve children in a variety of activities so they learn necessary skills and develop confidence in their physical abilities. Children will also learn to enjoy physical activity if they are directed by well-informed staff who model how physical activity can be fun. Regular physical activity will teach children how to move their bodies and provide opportunities for practicing basic motor skills. During this time, staff can show children how to do certain activities and improve their skills in the activity. In addition, participating in physical education increases the likelihood that children will engage in moderate to vigorous activity.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Find ways to add physical education into current lessons so that major schedule changes are not needed.
- Give staff physical activity resources.
- Hold a training session to help staff become more comfortable with and learn age-appropriate activities.
- Remind staff that being active with children can also help them create a healthier lifestyle.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Give parents information about the importance of physical activity for physical, social and mental health.
- Invite parents to visit and join in organized activity sessions.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Pick one child each week to share an active play idea.
- Give children a special prop, like a sock ball, and have them create a game with it. See how many ideas they come up with.
- Do structured activities in small doses, such as two 15-minute activities.
- Focus on process and technique over outcome.
- Repeat activities so children can practice their new skills.

**Model Policy 3: Children participate in outdoor active play two or more times a day.**

**Rationale**

Time spent outdoors benefits children in many ways. It is known that the more time children spend outdoors, the more physical activity they get. Being outside gives children more space to move around on their own and to play with other children, leading to both physical and social development. Most weather conditions are safe for children to be outside, so there are opportunities for outdoor active play almost every day.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Most weather conditions are fine for children to be outdoors. Weather conditions that pose a risk to children’s health and safety include:
  - Wind-chill at or below 15°F,
  - Heat index at or above 90°F,
  - Air quality defined as a threat by local health authorities or through ozone (smog) alerts.
- Encourage staff to be flexible to adjust usual outdoor time if needed.
- Use a variety of places for outdoor play, such as a park or elementary school playground.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Tell parents about your policy for outdoor play and weather conditions.
- Encourage parents to provide proper clothing for weather conditions.

**Model Policy 4: Active playtime is not withheld when children misbehave. Additional active playtime is offered for good behavior.**

**Rationale**

Limiting a child’s active playtime as punishment supports inactivity and could lead to long-term negative attitudes or feelings toward active play. Children will learn to connect physical activity not with a healthy lifestyle or fun, but rather with being bad. Punishment through physical activity restriction can increase the risk of overweight and associated health problems in childhood as well as later in life. Oftentimes, children become disruptive when they have extra energy. Limiting physical activity may then only worsen behavior rather than allow the children to use pent-up energy.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Encourage good behavior through positive reinforcements.
- Use some type of “time-out” period that is not associated with loss of active playtime.
- Educate staff on the importance of physical activity for children’s physical, mental and emotional development.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Help parents understand the importance of physical activity for young children.
- Encourage parents to develop a discipline model using positive reinforcement that can be used both at home and school.

**Model Policy 5: Inactive time (not including nap time or eating) when children are seated for more than 30 minutes at a time is limited to one time a week or less.**

**Rationale**

Children learn through interacting with their environment. Children need opportunities to leave their seats and explore the space around them. The longer children sit, the less focused they become. Activities that call for children to sit for long periods of time promote an inactive lifestyle. If children are inactive for long periods of time, they can be at risk for problems associated with overweight, even if active during other parts of the day.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Set reasonable expectations for children’s behavior during activities. Use hand or verbal signals to tell children to maintain control during active play.
- Develop a routine for moving between active play and seated or indoor activities. Children respond well to clear and consistent instructions.
- Have a training for staff to show them how to use activity in classroom lesson plans.
- Use active learning in daily lesson plans, allowing for children to learn through movement.
- Check daily schedules to ensure staff include enough activity time. Ask staff for ideas to shorten inactive times.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Help parents understand the importance of physical activity for young children.
- Encourage parents to limit inactive time at home.
- Invite parents to visit and join in active class sessions.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Talk with children about how they feel when being active.

**Model Policy 6: Television or videos are rarely or never shown in the facility.**

**Rationale**

Television and videos work against the important educational activities that occur during care. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, television viewing for preschool age children should be limited to one to two hours a day. Child care provides a stimulating environment that is more enriching than television viewing. Recent research has associated television viewing with being or becoming overweight. Supporting television viewing, especially for extended periods, may send mixed messages to children that this behavior is okay.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Work with staff to develop activities that provide an educational distraction for children during drop-off and/or pick-up times, such as music for dancing or the use of special toys.
- Reduce the number of televisions in the facility.
- Review class schedules. Allow television use only for educational purposes, such as part of a specific lesson.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Include parents in limiting television; suggest that parents make certain days of the week television free at home to support turning off the television in the facility.
- Encourage parents to take televisions out of children’s rooms.
- Invite parents into the center to help plan TV free days or to play with the children without the distraction of a television.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Plan a special activity in place of watching television. Have children provide ideas for favorite activities.
- Create a lesson that discusses limiting television usage and encourage children to turn off the television at home.
- Ask the children to make a list of activities that involve movement. Use these activities instead of turning on the television.

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## Policy Area: Play Environment

### Overview

Children should have safe and appropriate indoor and outdoor spaces that encourage large muscle activities. According to research, children tend to pattern their play based on their environment. Higher quality physical activity spaces help children to be more physically active. For example, when equipment is readily available, children play games that are more physically challenging.



Also, when given a large play area, children have the opportunity to join in activities that require running and chasing. Fixed and moveable play equipment that stimulates a variety of gross motor skills (large muscle movements) is important. Kids need to move in many different ways to develop muscles, build strong bones and grow.

**Model Policy 7: A wide variety of fixed play equipment (slides, climbing equipment) is available to meet the needs of all children.**

**Rationale**

Permanent play equipment is important in outdoor play spaces to support child development. Play equipment should allow children to do activities such as climbing, balancing, swinging, hanging, sliding and other full body movements. Children learn through interacting with their environment and need the physical challenges and opportunities given by fixed structures on their playground. The more varied the play equipment, the greater the variety of movements children will become skilled at.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Watch the children during play. See which pieces of equipment offer opportunities for children of different ages.
- Use recycled materials such as old tires for play equipment. Tires can be arranged for children to run in, out and around as well as to swing, climb and jump from.
- Consider redesigning the playground layout using natural barriers such as flowerbeds, an herb garden or trees. This creates natural tracks around which children can run or ride on wheeled toys. Playground screens can be made using posts and fabric to create a divider that children can push balls under, throw balls over or run around.
- Review the licensing requirements for playground areas, addressing issues of surfacing under play equipment, fall zones and equipment height.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Talk with parents about why the facility supports a variety of fixed equipment on the playground.
- Ask parents for help with play area design and equipment.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Provide opportunities to play.
- Encourage inactive children by offering new and different equipment.

**Model Policy 8: A wide variety of portable play equipment is available for children to use at the same time.**

**Rationale**

Portable play equipment promotes a variety of motor skills, which helps children develop and expand eye-hand and eye-foot coordination and develop other fundamental motor skills (such as throwing, catching and striking). Enough equipment should be available so that children do not have to wait long to use it. Equipment should be of interest to the children and be available during indoor and outdoor playtime. Children who play with equipment increase their activity level and often join in more challenging and more difficult play experiences.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Watch children during play to see what equipment is most used or not used.
- Inventory portable play equipment to ensure variety in the items available.
  - Balls of varied sizes,
  - Hoops,
  - Wheeled toys,
  - Wagons,
  - Parachutes.
- Create a budget to buy or replace portable equipment once or twice a year.
- Find discount catalogs or Web sites to buy equipment.
- Ask parents to donate portable equipment, such as wheeled toys, balls, jump ropes, etc.
- Revise class schedules to have fewer children at one time in the play space.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Share the importance of equipment for the motor development of young children with parents.
- Give parents a handout on the different types of portable play equipment and their benefits.
- Tell parents how their child uses certain kinds of equipment to help support this practice at home.
- Ask parents what play equipment or toys their child enjoys at home.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

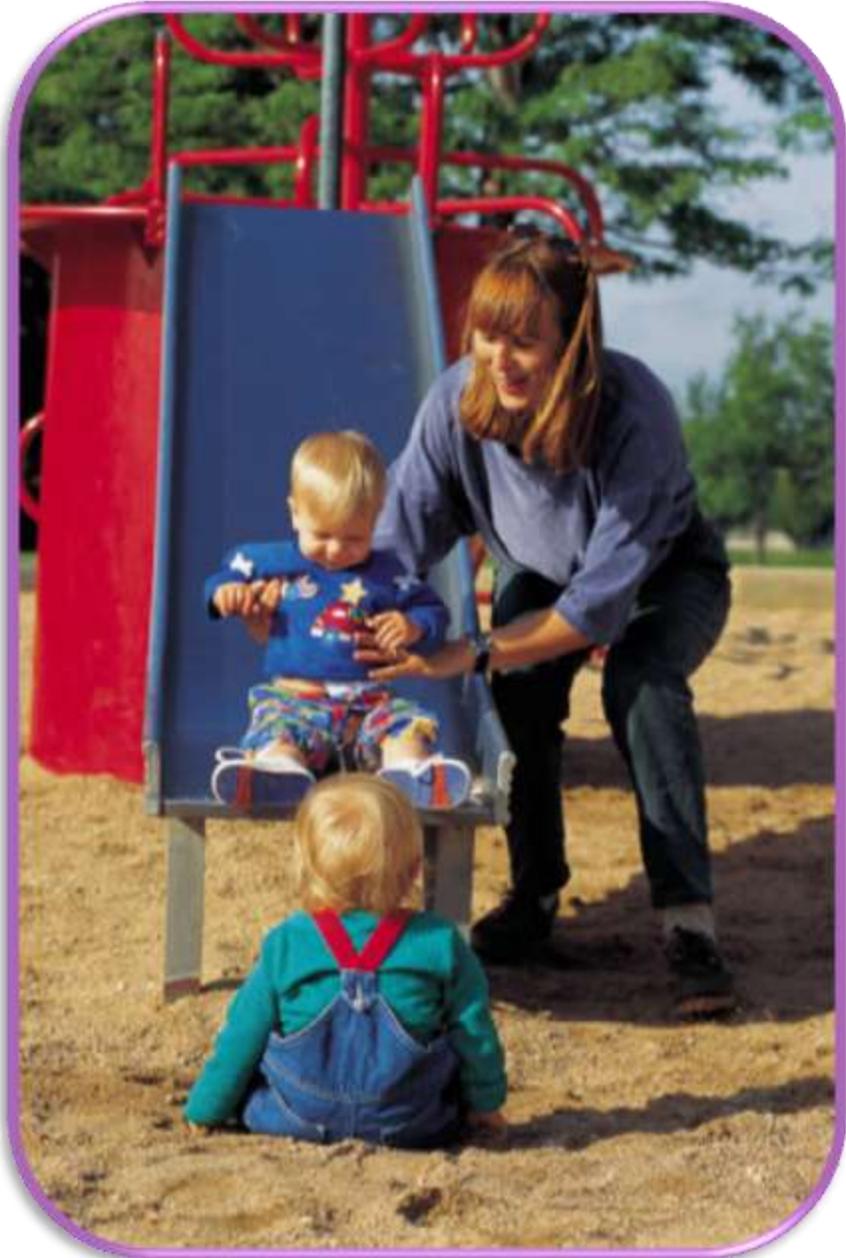
- Plan opportunities for play.
- Use playtime to teach sharing and responsibility. Encourage children to clean up before going back inside and to use only the toys they would like to play with.
- Add new (or rotate) small equipment on a regular basis.
- Encourage inactive children through new and different equipment. All children can find something active they love to do.

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## Policy Area: Supporting Physical Activity

### Overview

Children look to adults for encouragement and instruction on how to use their bodies. Being physically active with children helps to model skills and teaches them more advanced movements such as skipping, hopping, dribbling and throwing—skills they will need to join in activities as they get older. As role models for children, child care staff should be aware of the importance of physical activity. Staff increase physical activity by prompting children to try new activities. Also, the facility can encourage children and families to be physically active by displaying posters or making books that promote physical activity available for children.



**Model Policy 9: Staff members encourage children to be active and join children in active play.**

**Rationale**

Children learn by watching what adults, especially teachers, do. Teachers can shape children’s attitudes toward physical activity. Children will see that staff enjoy being physically active, will believe physical activity is important and will learn and remember movements better. When teachers express joy during physical activity, it motivates children to participate in the same activity, as well as form positive associations with physical activity.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Give staff information about how physical activity helps children develop social, cognitive and motor skills, and provides health benefits.
- Provide training to staff to increase their comfort with leading physical activities.
- Remind staff that they do not have to be experts to model and encourage children’s activity.
- Promote activity among the staff with a facility-wide challenge using step counters or amount of physical activity.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Talk with parents about ways to be good physical activity role models for children.
- Share positive comments with parents about active play seen during the day.
- Share ideas for games and activities that parents can use at home.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Ask children questions (How does it feel to run around?) about activities.
- Offer encouragement, such as, “Way to go!”; “That was a great throw!”; or through smiles and laughter during active time.

**Model Policy 10: The center displays pictures or posters that promote physical activity.**

**Rationale**

The environment can shape behaviors related to physical activity. Therefore, it is important that children’s environments support physical activity. Simple acts of putting up posters, discussing and asking questions, giving positive support and being happy during times of active playtime will show children that this part of their day is valuable to them and others.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Order free or low-cost posters online.
- Have children create their own pictures of them being active with their families and friends to hang on the walls.
- Borrow books about children being active from the local library and read them to children.

**Tips for getting support from parents:**

- Encourage parents to post pictures at home.
- Give parents the artwork their child created that supports physical activity.

**Tips for getting support from kids:**

- Discuss the posters or artwork with children.

**Model Policy 11: Staff members receive training on physical activity (not including playground safety) twice per year or more.**

**Rationale**

Staff involved in direct care should be educated about the importance of physical activity. They also need to be trained on ways to mix a variety of fun physical activity sessions into their daily lesson plans and group activities. Such training can increase staff’s comfort level in leading and participating in physical activities. Training may lead staff to become more involved in both leading and participating in physical activities with the children, which will benefit their own lives too.

**Tips for changing current practice:**

- Explain the importance of training to staff.
- Encourage all staff to participate in trainings.
- Find ways to integrate physical activity training in other in-service training.
- Look for other organizations that can provide training, such as the Child Care Health Consultation Program or University of Missouri Extension.

## Web Resources

The Internet has many resources that can help child care providers with their foodservice operation and with education of staff, parents and children.

### Nutrition and Menu Planning Information

<http://www.dhss.mo.gov/cacfp/> - Official site of the Missouri Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

- Links to information on other Missouri nutrition programs and activities
- Training available

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/default.htm> - Food and Nutrition Service Online  
Homepage for all USDA Child Nutrition Programs

- News & Updates
- Resources
- Recipe Roundup
- CACFP Information
- Useful links
- Food & Nutrition Information Center
- Team Nutrition
- Food Safety

Get to most CACFP information by clicking on “Child and Adult Care Food Program” under “Programs.” Check “Resources” for a link to a wide variety of publications.

[http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/childcare\\_recipes.html](http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/childcare_recipes.html) - USDA Recipes for Child Care

- Standardized recipes, analyzed for nutrient content, and updated with Critical Control Point information based on the *2005 Food Code Supplement*. Each recipe contributes to a reimbursable meal served to children in the CACFP. Written for 25 and 50 servings, the recipes can easily be adjusted to serve larger or smaller groups.

<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/buildingblocks.html>  
<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/foodbuyingguide.html>

- Team Nutrition resources, including Building Blocks for Fun and Healthy Meals and the USDA Food Buying Guide.

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/childcare/index.html>

- Click on “Child Care Providers” in lower right corner for information on recipes, menu planning, infant feeding, special diets, food safety and more.

<http://www.nfsmi.org/>- National Food Service Management Institute

- Downloadable food-service training resources
- Web-based training
- Mealtime Memo, a newsletter for child care providers participating in the CACFP, focused on good nutrition for young children. Each issue offers a recipe from the USDA Recipes for Child Care and a week's menus.

<http://www.mypyramid.gov>

- Personalized eating plans and interactive tools to help you plan and assess food choices
- Eating plans available for many different ages, including preschoolers and older children
- Tips on how to maximize the nutrition from meals
- Links to the most current dietary guidelines
- Activities and downloadable handouts

<http://outreach.missouri.edu/hes/food.htm> - University of Missouri Extension Program

- Food & Fitness at Missouri Families
- Food Safety
- Nutriteach – teacher resources
- Food & Nutrition Guides
- MyPyramid
- Healthy Start – preschool curriculum
- Health Observances Calendar

<http://nutritionforkids.com> - Sponsored by 24 Carrot Press

- Books, teaching kits and other resources for purchase and/or download, organized by topic.
- Provides news, articles, tips, recipes and *more*, including their free [Feeding Kids Newsletter](#)

<http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/fitsource> - Fit Source

- Links to a wide variety of physical activity and nutrition resources, including activities, lesson plans, healthy recipes, information for parents and many other downloadable tools that can be used to incorporate physical activity and nutrition into child care programs

<http://www.ag.uidaho.edu/feeding/>

- Variety of educational materials, learning activities, and resources for child care providers, Head Start teachers, food-service workers and other professionals who prepare and provide food to young children in group settings

<http://www.colormehealthy.com/> - Color Me Healthy

- Program developed to reach children ages 4 and 5 with fun, interactive learning opportunities on physical activity and healthy eating
- Simple tips to help families

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/cyclecare.html>

- Downloadable menu toolkit designed for CACFP participants; although the information is helpful to any child care provider
- Five weeks of breakfast, lunch and snack menus, with recipes and resources

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/index.html> - Fruits & Veggies--More Matters®

- Many different fruit and vegetable resources, including recipes, ideas for using produce and tips for parents



### **Physical Activity Resources**

<http://www.pkimbrell.com/>

- Training resources for physical activity in child care

<http://www.cmch.tv/>

- Resources and information on media use with children

<http://www.allianceforchildhood.org/>

- Fact sheets and resources on the importance of play for children

<http://www.poemsnc.org/>

- Resources for creating quality outdoor environments for child care
- Checklist for child care teachers/caregivers and administrators interested in learning more about creating higher quality environments for children's outdoor play and learning

[http://www.aahperd.org/Naspe/template.cfm?template=teachers\\_toolbox.html](http://www.aahperd.org/Naspe/template.cfm?template=teachers_toolbox.html)

- Download monthly ideas for promoting quality physical activity
- Bulletin board ideas, puzzles and games, information about the nation's health observances, and the newest resource materials

### **Education Resources**

<http://www.choosykids.com/>

- Downloadable and for purchase resources such as coloring sheets and posters for encouraging healthy nutrition and physical activity habits in children

<http://www.healthy-start.com/>

- Lesson plans that promote positive healthy behaviors to help prevent childhood obesity and other risk factors for long-term illnesses later in life

# Appendices



- Appendix A: Parent Handout—Facility Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies
- Appendix B: Facility Resource—Sample Policies
- Appendix C: Parent Handout—Healthy Foods for Celebrations
- Appendix D: Parent Handout—Guidelines for Healthy Celebrations
- Appendix E: Facility Resource—Nonfood Fundraising Ideas

## Appendix A: Parent Handout

### Facility Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies

In an effort to provide the best possible nutrition and physical activity environment for the children in our facility, we have adopted the following policies. The administration and staff appreciate support from parents in promoting the health of the children.

#### Nutrition Policies

##### Beverages

- ✓ Drinking water is available at all times, both indoors and outdoors.
- ✓ 100% juice is offered no more than three times a week.
- ✓ Only skim or 1% milk is served to children age 2 or older.
- ✓ Soda and other vending machines are not located on-site.

##### Menus and Variety

- ✓ Our facility uses a cycle menu of three weeks or longer that changes with the seasons. Entrees are repeated no more than two times throughout the cycle and repetition of other foods is minimal.
- ✓ Menus include foods from a variety of cultures.

##### Mealtime Environment

- ✓ Staff members allow children to decide how much to eat. Children are never forced to eat or try new foods.
- ✓ Staff members encourage children to try new or less favorite foods but never force them to try or eat something they do not like.
- ✓ Staff members never use food to reward good behavior.
- ✓ Staff members join children at the table for meals and snacks.
- ✓ Staff members consume the same food and drinks as children. Staff members do not consume other food or drinks in front of the children.
- ✓ Meals are served family style.
- ✓ We display pictures or posters that support healthy eating.

##### Foods from Outside the Facility

- ✓ Our facility has guidelines for foods or nonfood items brought into the facility and served for holidays and celebrations.
- ✓ Holidays are celebrated with mostly healthy foods and nonfood treats.
- ✓ Fundraising activities consist of selling nonfood items only.

##### Nutrition Education

- ✓ Staff members receive training on nutrition (other than food safety and food program guidelines) at least twice per year.
- ✓ Nutrition education opportunities are offered to parents at least twice a year.

#### Physical Activity Policies

##### Active Play and Inactive Time

- ✓ Children have at least 120 minutes of active playtime each day.
- ✓ Children participate in structured physical activities (teacher-led) two or more times a day.
- ✓ Children participate in outdoor active play two or more times a day.

- ✓ Active playtime is not withheld when children misbehave. Additional active playtime is offered for good behavior.
- ✓ Inactive time (not including nap time or eating) when children are seated for more than 30 minutes at a time is limited to one time a week or less.
- ✓ Television or videos are rarely or never shown in our facility.

#### **Play Environment**

- ✓ A wide variety of fixed play equipment (slides, climbing equipment) is available to meet the needs of all children.
- ✓ A wide variety of portable play equipment is available for children to use at the same time.

#### **Supporting Physical Activity**

- ✓ Staff members encourage children to be active and join children in active play.
- ✓ We display pictures or posters that promote physical activity.
- ✓ Staff members receive training on physical activity (not including playground safety) twice per year or more.

**Appendix B: Facility Resource  
Sample Policies**

***Child Care Policy 1.0  
Foods from Outside Child Care***

**PURPOSE:** To provide clear guidance on food items the child care facility allows to be brought into the facility so that staff and parents know how to best meet the nutritional and food safety needs of the children.

**SCOPE:** Center; Large Family Child Care Home; Small Family Child Care Home

**BACKGROUND:** Child care centers play a vital role in providing safe, nutritious food in a pleasant learning environment. Eating nutritious foods and learning good mealtime behaviors are important due to the rapid growth and the major developmental changes children undergo. Mealtime can also be an opportunity for learning and developing social and motor skills and for introducing new foods. Skills such as hand washing, table manners and carrying on a conversation can be developed and reinforced at mealtime.

**SNACKS AND MEALS:** *(insert center name)* will provide a snack/meal to children present at scheduled snack/meal times only. This facility's menus are regulated by the Missouri Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and meet the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines. The snack/meal menus are posted at the center with copies available upon request. All children will be served the same items during snack/meal time. We ask that children at least try new food items. We cannot accommodate food preferences but do recognize your need to restrict certain foods in your child's diet for medical reasons. If your child has allergies to particular foods or is on a special diet, our facility must have signed documentation from a doctor or medical authority stating your child's special dietary needs and the foods that may be substituted to meet those needs.

**FOOD FROM OUTSIDE CHILD CARE:** *(insert center name)* is committed to providing safe, healthy and nutritious food to children in our care. We respectfully request that no foods be brought from home or elsewhere into the facility. Your child's diet, while in our care, is specifically planned to follow the Missouri CACFP menu requirements and meet the USDA guidelines for a child's recommended needs. Children arriving with food from an outside source will be asked to dispose of the food items.

**RATIONALE:** *Food-borne illness may occur when food has not been properly handled or maintained at appropriate temperatures. Although many of these illnesses are limited to vomiting and diarrhea, they can be life threatening, especially for young children. Restricting food brought into the facility reduces the risk of food-borne illness from unknown procedures used in home preparation and transport. The facility has an obligation to ensure that the food shared with*

*other children complies with the food safety and nutrition guidelines for meals and snacks.*

*Foods of low nutritional value, such as sweets, candy and potato chips brought from home, can lead to problems in the child care setting. For example:*

- *Social problems between children may occur when some children receive “treat” foods in their lunch, while others do not.*
- *Children can become confused about which foods are nutritious.*
- *Children often have small appetites. When they fill up on less nutritious foods, they may not have room for the foods necessary to meet their nutritional needs.*

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of (insert center name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Child Care Policy 2.0**

### **Celebrations/Special Occasions**

**PURPOSE:** To provide clear guidance on items that parents can provide for children in the child care facility during celebrations/special occasions so that staff and parents know how to best meet the nutritional and food safety needs of the children.

**SCOPE:** Center; Group Family Child Care Home; Family Child Care Home

**CELEBRATIONS/SPECIAL OCCASSIONS:** Our facility realizes it is important to parents that their child be allowed to celebrate special occasions, such as birthdays and holidays. If you want your child to celebrate a special occasion while in our facility please let us know a few days ahead of time. *(insert center name)* will provide special treats for each child’s birthday or holiday celebration, with attention to good nutrition and healthful eating habits. Our “Healthy Foods for Celebrations” form provides a checklist of items the facility is able to provide. Foods from outside the facility are not allowed due to health and sanitation issues. If you want to provide something beyond what the facility provides, the items must be nonfood items. Please refer to the parent handout “Guidelines for Healthy Celebrations” for some examples of appropriate treats. Please check with your child’s teacher before bringing anything in.

**RATIONALE:** *Food-borne illness may occur when food has not been properly handled or maintained at appropriate temperatures. Although many of these illnesses are limited to vomiting and diarrhea, they can be life threatening, especially for young children. Restricting food brought into the facility by parents reduces the risk of food-borne illness from unknown procedures used in home preparation and transport. The facility has an obligation to ensure that the food shared with other children complies with the food safety and nutrition guidelines for meals and snacks.*

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of *(insert center name)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix C: Parent Handout

### **Healthy Foods for Celebrations**

**Please help us encourage lifelong healthy habits among our children. We encourage parents to join us for their child's birthday or other special occasion.**

Typically, foods for celebrations include cupcakes, candy, cookies and other “treats” that have a large amount of sugar, calories and fat. There is nothing wrong with an occasional treat, but unhealthy choices have become the norm rather than the exception.

The following is a list of alternatives our facility provides for celebrations/special occasions that promote and reinforce good nutrition.

Please mark the items your child prefers so that (insert center name) can better provide for your child.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Raisins – regular or chocolate covered | <input type="checkbox"/> Animal crackers  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whole-grain crackers with cheese cubes | <input type="checkbox"/> Pretzels         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mozzarella string cheese pack          | <input type="checkbox"/> Dried fruit      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flavored milk                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit smoothies  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single-serving boxes of cereal         | <input type="checkbox"/> Yogurt           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tortilla chips and salsa               | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% juice boxes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Granola bars                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit muffins    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetables and low-fat dip             | <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh fruit      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh fruit and low-fat dip            | <input type="checkbox"/> Ants on a log    |

If you would like something other than the foods listed above served at a celebration for your child, please talk with our facility staff.

## Appendix D: Parent Handout

### **Guidelines for Healthy Celebrations**

**Please help us encourage lifelong healthy habits in our children. We encourage parents to join us for their child's birthday or other special occasion.**

Our facility provides healthy foods for celebrations. If you feel that you want to provide "treats" for a special celebration here is a list of nonfood suggestions.



Stickers  
Little toys  
Toothbrushes  
Barrettes  
Plastic rings  
Erasers  
Balloon racers  
Finger/hand puppets  
Glow-in-the-dark items  
Slap bracelets  
Party favors

Fake teeth  
Rubber stamps  
Rulers  
Army men  
Decorative pencils  
Holiday theme items  
Fake tattoos  
Bubbles  
Plane gliders  
Whistles  
Party hats  
Certificates

Before bringing items to the facility, make sure the items you wish to bring are approved and age appropriate for the group celebrating.

Depending on the size and number of children in your child's class, providing treats or gifts to all the children could become costly. Here are a couple of low-cost, easy ideas that will give your child a memorable experience on their special day:

- Decorate the child care center or provide the decorations for your child's classroom. Example: A banner with the child's name and "Happy Birthday." This will make your child feel special during the celebration/special occasion without adding unneeded fat and sugar in the diet.
- Take time to have a meal with your child at the center. This gives your child personal attention.
- Buy or supply a special book to be read during the day. Make it even more special by coming to your child's class to read the story.
- Plan and provide a special craft project for your child's class.
- Work with your child's teacher to plan special party games or activities.



## Appendix E: Facility Resource

### Nonfood Fundraising Ideas

Food fundraisers may help the financial health of the facility, but at the expense of the children and family's physical health. Try one of these ideas for your next fundraiser.

#### To DO:

- Ask local businesses to donate a portion of the sales on a given day or time to the center
- Organize a pet or car wash
- Invite community members and businesses to donate items (e.g., baby-sitting services, lawn care, gift certificates) for a silent auction
- Recycle cans/bottles/paper
- Host a treasure or scavenger hunt
- Organize a book fair
- Recycle cell phones
- Rent out special parking spaces
- Ask parents or community members to donate items for a center yard sale

#### To SELL:

- Magazines
- Holiday ornaments/wreaths/flowers
- Gift wrap or greeting cards
- Plants, flowers or bulbs
- Mother's Day hanging baskets
- Cookbooks with recipes from teachers and center families
- Picture frames
- Emergency/first-aid kits
- Pedometers
- Calendars featuring center-specific functions and artwork



For more information or ideas, visit the following Web sites:

Association of Fund-Raising Distributors and Suppliers

<http://www.afrds.org/>

Fundraising Bank

<http://www.fundraising-ideas.com/>

PTO Today

[School Fundraisers: Ideas and Help for School Fundraising](http://www.ptotoday.com/fundraising?position=left)

<http://www.ptotoday.com/fundraising?position=left>

Adapted from Iowa Action for Healthy Kids material

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Alternate forms of this publication for persons with disabilities may be obtained by contacting the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services at (573) 522-2820. Hearing and speech impaired citizens telephone 800-735-2966. VOICE 800-735-2466.  
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